

***NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE INSTRUCTION 1-901
APRIL 30, 2004***

***Administration and Management
FOREIGN TRAVEL, NWSPD 1-9***

FOREIGN TRAVEL ORDER PROCEDURES

NOTICE: This publication is available at: <http://www.nws.noaa.gov/directives/>.

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NWS Foreign Travel Order Procedures

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1. Introduction: This instruction provides the steps necessary for requesting National Weather Service Headquarters (NWSH) approval and reporting of foreign travel using the Foreign Travel Order System (FOTOS II). This process requires Financial Management Centers (FMCs) to enter planned foreign travel trips into the FOTOS II database. Upon approval by the Deputy Assistant Administrator (DAA), travel authorization numbers are supplied and the documentation required to accomplish the trip can be completed

2. Annual Foreign Travel Plan: All FMCs will prepare an Annual Foreign Travel Plan for the next fiscal year prior to the end of the current fiscal year. The DAA and/or the Chief Financial Officer/Chief Administrative Officer (CFO/CAO) will set and announce the final annual deadline for plan submission. The following approval and review steps must be completed before each FMC can finalize their foreign travel plan:

- a. the traveling employee's supervisor will obtain FMC Director approval and funding for the trip;
 - b. the traveler will submit trip information to the FMC Point Of Contact (POC);
 - c. the FMC POC will review the trip information for completeness;
 - d. the FMC POC will check the estimated trip costs against FMC budget cap;
 - e. the FMC POC will verify FMC director approval;
 - f. the FMC POC will enter the trip plan in FOTOS II system;
 - g. the NWS FOTOS II Coordinator will review planned trip information with the IA Chief and submit planned trip information to DAA for approval; and
 - h. the NWS FOTOS II Coordinator will enter DAA approvals, disapprovals or cancellations in the FOTOS II system.
3. Monthly Foreign Travel Plan: A monthly update meeting is held with the Chief, IA and DAA.
 - a. the NWSH FOTOS II Coordinator will retrieve updated plans at the beginning of each month and review with the Chief, IA;
 - b. the NWSH FOTOS II Coordinator will provide newly submitted trips to the DAA for approval or disapproval; and
 - c. the NWSH FOTOS II Coordinator will enter approvals/disapprovals in FOTOS II system and notify the FMC POCs that the FOTOS II system has been updated.
4. Travel Authorization: The FMC Directors, NWS CFO/CAO, NWS Chief Information Officer (CIO), and NWS Director of Strategic Planning may approve foreign travel authorizations for trips approved in the Foreign Travel Plan for employees within their respective organizations. The NWS DAA, or their designee, must approve foreign travel for the FMC Directors and the Chief, IA. The following steps must be completed to obtain a travel authorization:
 - a. the FMC POC will provide the person responsible for preparing the foreign travel authorization with the travel authorization information from FOTOS II;
 - b. the FMC travel authorization preparer will prepare the travel authorization, check visa requirements, obtain visa applications, check passport validity and renew if necessary;

- c. the FMC travel authorization preparer will prepare and fax the country clearance cable form, along with the travel authorization form to the NWSH FOTOS II Coordinator;
 - d. the NWS FOTOS II Coordinator will prepare and obtain clearances from the State Department. The Coordinator will then submit the clearance cable to the Commerce Communications Office for transmission;
 - e. the FMC travel authorization preparer will send visa requirements (see Appendix B) to NOAA Travel if visa is required;
 - f. upon receipt of signed travel authorization, the NOAA Travel Office will return passport/visas to field offices via express mail contractor; local offices will receive passport by NOAA Travel courier; and
 - g. the FMC travel authorization preparer will send a copy of the completed travel authorization to the FMC POC for input (update) into FOTOS II.
5. Travel Voucher: The following steps must be completed during travel voucher preparation:
 - a. the traveler will submit voucher information to the FMC travel preparer;
 - b. the FMC travel preparer will prepare the travel voucher using the travel authorization in Travel Manager and obtain appropriate approval signatures;
 - c. the FMC travel preparer will submit a paper copy of the travel voucher to Finance with a copy of the signed travel authorization and receipts;
 - d. the FMC travel preparer will provide the traveler and FMC POC with a copy of the signed travel voucher; and
 - e. the FMC POC will enter the voucher information into FOTOS II.
6. Outside Reimbursement: If an outside source or Foreign Government reimburses the traveler for travel costs, the travel authorization preparer must prepare either a CD-210, Record of Gift or Bequest, or a CD-342, Record of Gifts and Decorations from Foreign Governments. The traveler must submit the completed form with the travel voucher to Finance and ensure that a copy is sent to the FMC POC.
7. FMC Reporting: The FMCs are responsible for updating FOTOS II and for ensuring that their information is current and foreign travel obligations and expenditures remain within the budget caps established by the DAA. Any exceptions must be approved by the DAA. CFO2 staff will request monthly updates to the planned versus actual foreign travel expense using a spreadsheet provided by CFO2.
8. Emergency Travel: Unexpected travel of an emergency nature must be approved by the DAA and added to FOTOS II immediately upon approval. Submit an e-mail justification to the DAA and copy the NWSH FOTOS II Coordinator. Be sure to indicate whether funds are available in your existing foreign travel budget to cover.

APPENDIX A - International Travel “Type” Categories

Category 1 Operational Travel

Equipment maintenance
Cross-border/neighbor exchange
Training, such as familiarization flights/floats

Category 2 Obligatory Travel

*International organizations: WMO, ICAO, ITU, etc.
*Bilateral activities
Travel to meet U.S. foreign policy objectives

Category 3 Reimbursable Travel

Projects
WMO Voluntary Cooperation Program activities

Category 4 Discretionary Travel

*Invitational
*Scientific meetings
*International organizations, not obligatory
Visits

*Can involve NWS or reimbursable funding

APPENDIX B - Web Sites

NOAA TRAVEL OFFICE HOME PAGE:

www.ofa.noaa.gov/~finance/travel1.htm

Passport Application and Visa Forms **only**–not instructions:

www.traveldocs.com

Visa Requirements (for official passports)

1. Go to: www.ofa.noaa.gov/~finance/travel1.htm
2. scroll down to NOAA Travel Regulations and click
3. scroll down to Chapter 306 Foreign Travel
4. select Chapter 306.7 Foreign Travel Documents
5. Visa requirements are in Ch. 306.7-3, pages 9-24 just after the defensive travel briefing.

DEFENSIVE TRAVEL BRIEFING

1. Go to: www.ofa.noaa.gov/~finance/travel1.htm
2. scroll down to NOAA Travel Regulations and click
3. scroll down to Chapter 306 Foreign Travel
4. select Chapter 306.7 Foreign Travel Documents
5. The Defensive Travel Briefing is in Chapter 306.7-3, after the foreign travel checklist. It consists of 5 pages to read and one page to complete, sign and include with the travel package. A new briefing is required only once per year. Include a copy of any previously signed briefing when traveling less than a year after the original briefing was signed.

Foreign per diem rates:

Foreign travel rates can be found on the following State Department website:

www.state.gov/m/a/als/prdm/

In the left hand column, click on the appropriate year; select the appropriate month; scroll through alphabetically to find the appropriate country and then city.

If city or country is not listed, use “other” per diem rate for that country.

Additional information available on the State Department website:

- Department of State travel warnings.
- Consular Information

APPENDIX C - How to Obtain an Official Passport

If you have a personal passport issued within the past 15 years, it expedites the process of obtaining an official passport, since you can use that for identification and don't have to appear in person. Fill out a DSP 82 "Passport Application by Mail" (considered a renewal application) instead of a DSP 11 (for first time passport) which requires you to appear in person.

If you are renewing an official passport, use a DSP 82 and your expired or soon to expire passport for identification, 2 photos, defensive travel briefing and a "dummy" travel authorization. These are all sent to the NOAA Transportation Assistant in the NOAA Travel Office in Germantown, Maryland. See details below.

If you don't have a personal passport to use for identification, you will need a **Certified Birth Certificate with a raised seal on it**. If you don't have one, contact the **Bureau of Vital Statistics**, right away, in the county you were born in, to expedite the issuance of a duplicate copy. Normally it costs a nominal fee from \$3-\$12 and can be ordered by internet or phone in most areas. You can claim this expense on your travel voucher.

If you are in the Washington, D.C. area, you will have to appear in person at the Passport Services Office on 19th Street downtown Washington, DC and will need the certified copy to show the passport clerk at that time.

If you are outside the DC area, you will apply (for a first time official passport with a birth certificate if you don't have a personal passport) through the clerk of the court or accepting post office. Details about applying and appearing in person will be sent from the NOAA Travel Assistant of the NOAA Travel Office **after your paperwork is received** (dummy authorization, passport app. etc.). Do not sign the DSP 11. You have to sign it in front of the passport agent.

Whether you have a passport or birth certificate, these are the items you will need:

1. **Dummy travel authorization** - with the proposed trip or make up one (no cost, travel authorization number or signatures are required). Doing a "dummy authorization" expedites sending in the passport application since it doesn't require the additional foreign travel documentation or signatures that can delay the authorization. This authorization can be done in Travel Manager or on form CD-29.
2. **Passport application** - Check with your office (or post office) or www.traveldocs.com for the applications. See Appendix B for step by step instructions. In the address section, **write in big letters "CROA"**. This is a code for the passport office to put the passport into the NOAA/Commerce box. NOAA Travel courier picks up from the box daily and will return your official and personal passport (if applicable) directly to you. Passport documents are hand carried by the NOAA Courier, not put in the regular pouch mail. The NOAA Transportation Assistant will FEDEX or courier the passports to you for signature.

3. **Security briefing** - Read the 5 pages of information, **complete the acknowledgment form on the last page, sign it, and turn in just the last page. Keep a copy.** It has to be completed once a year. A copy can be found on the NOAA Travel Office Home Page. Step by step instructions to the site can be found in Appendix B, listed under Defensive Travel Briefing.

4. **Passport photos** - If you are in Silver Spring area, two identical (2"x2") photos can be taken at the NOAA Security Office, #5338, SSMC- 4, Telephone: 301-713-0954. Fill out a **NOAA 65-8** form and get it signed in your office. The cost, \$3 per set for 2 photos, will be charged to your office. No appointment necessary for photos. The office is open for photos Monday - Friday 7:30 a.m. - noon and 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. If you need visa photos, get several sets at the same time. If you are at another NOAA location, any local photographer can take passport photos and they can be reimbursed on your travel voucher.

5. **Letter of Expedite for Passport** - If you need a passport and have less than 30 days prior to an actual trip, you will need to send a letter of expedite/justification prepared on official NWS letterhead to the State Department, Chief of Passport Services Office, from your supervisor, explaining why you need the passport in less than 30 days (i.e. why imperative to attend this meeting etc.). Also mention if you need to obtain any visas.

These are the items needed to apply for either a first time passport or renewal:

Passport application (DSP-11 or DSP-82)

Signed security briefing

Dummy travel authorization (or actual authorization if you have sufficient time)

Passport photos (2)

Personal passport (if done by mail) or certified birth certificate

(Letter of expedite to the Chief of the Passport Services Office, if there are less than 30 days prior to travel).

All these documents go to NOAA Travel ASAP with a note to the NOAA Travel Assistant (301-444-2135) explaining this will be an actual trip, but this is a dummy authorization to expedite issuance of an official passport. PLEASE KEEP COPIES OF EVERYTHING YOU SUBMIT. If you are in Silver Spring area, there is a box on the DAA's Secretary's desk on the 18th floor of SSMC-2, for the NOAA Courier to take travel items to the Travel Office daily.

Please do not wait to apply for your passport. It can take 2-4 weeks to obtain a passport renewal once the forms have been sent to the Passport Office; and 4 weeks or more for a DSP-11, first time passport application. You will need extra time if you need a visa for any of the countries you are traveling to on official business. Please check with your secretary, or the NOAA Travel Office home page for visa requirements.